

IN THE CLAIMS

Please replace the texts of claims 1, 6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 17, and 21 with the following texts.

1. (Amended) A hearing aid system, comprising:

a hearing aid case configured to be worn behind the ear of a user, the case containing a microphone, a processor unit, and a speaker for delivering amplified sounds to an output connector of the case;

a tube having a first end for attaching to the output connector of the case and a second end, the tube having a preformed shape including a first bend extending from the case over the top of the ear of the user and a second bend extending from an outside of the ear into an ear canal of the user; and

an eartip connected to the second end of the tube and configured to fit within the ear canal while allowing sounds outside and within the ear to pass through the ear canal around the eartip, wherein said tube is sufficiently rigid such that a 1 inch segment of said tube is not deflected 0.1 inch by a force of 1 g or less.

6. (Amended) The hearing aid system according to Claim 1, wherein the hearing aid case including a battery has a mass of 1.5 grams or less.

8. (Amended) The hearing aid system according to Claim 7, wherein the first end of the tube includes a connecting member having a keyway configured to receive the key of the case and an opening for receiving the nipple of the case.

11. (Amended) The hearing aid tube according to Claim 10, wherein the tube has been formed at high temperature to retain the first and second bends.

12. (Amended) A hearing aid tube for connecting a case of a behind the ear hearing aid to an ear canal eartip, the tube comprising a preformed tube having an outer diameter of about 1.6 mm or less and formed of a material with a durometer of about 65 to 85 Shore D, wherein the tube has a first bend configured to extend over the top of the ear of the user and a second bend configured to extend from an outside of the ear into an ear canal of the user and the

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tube is sufficiently rigid that a 1 inch (2.54 cm) segment of the tube is not deflected 0.1 inch (2.54 mm) by a force of 1 gram or less.

14. (Amended) A hearing aid case, comprising:  
 a case body configured to be worn behind the ear of a user, the case body containing a microphone, a processor unit, and a speaker;  
 a battery compartment within the case; and  
 a tube attachment end for connecting the case body to a hearing aid tube for delivering amplified sounds from the speaker to an ear canal of the user, the tube attachment end including:  
 an end surface for abutting an end of the hearing aid tube;  
 a nipple extending from the end surface and configured to be received in the end of the hearing aid tube, the nipple having a longitudinal axis;  
 a side surface for abutting a side surface of the hearing aid tube; and  
 a key extending along the side surface in a direction substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the nipple, the key arranged to maintain a proper orientation between the case body and the hearing aid tube when the hearing aid tube is connected to the case body, wherein the nipple includes a circumferential ring for retaining the hearing aid tube in a snap fit.

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17. (Amended) A kit of parts for assembling hearing aids, comprising:  
 a plurality of tubes each having a preformed shape including a hook for extending from a hearing aid case over a top of an ear of a user, a run extending from the top of the ear to the ear canal, and an ear canal end extending into the ear canal of the user, wherein the plurality of tubes differ in a length of the run or a length of the ear canal end;  
 a plurality of eartips for connection to the ear canal end of the tubes and configured to fit within the ear canal while allowing sound to pass through the ear canal around the eartip; and  
 a plurality of behind the ear hearing aid cases including different sound processing components the cases having a connection end for connection to the tubes, wherein each of said plurality of tubes is sufficiently rigid such that a 1 inch segment of each of said plurality of tubes is not deflected 0.1 inch by a force of 1 g or less.

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21. (Amended) A hearing aid device, comprising:

an eartip adapted to be inserted into a human ear canal and to engage an anatomical structure of the canal; and

a tube having a first end adapted to be connected to a source of sound and a second end adapted to be connected to the eartip, the tube shaped to have a hook-shaped portion which can be engaged with the ear over the top of the ear and a portion which extends into the ear canal, and the tube having sufficient rigidity to position and hold the eartip in the ear canal when the hearing aid device is engaged with the ear, wherein said tube is sufficiently rigid such that a 1 inch segment of said tube is not deflected 0.1 inch by a force of 1 g or less.

Please add the following new claims 30-32 to the application:

30. (New) The hearing aid system according to claim 1, wherein said eartip comprises an interior socket with a plurality of internal circular grooves and the second end of said tube comprises a cylindrical member with a plurality of annular ribs on the surface of the cylindrical member, the annular ribs being adapted to be accommodated to the plurality of internal circular grooves.

31. (New) The kit of parts for assembling hearing aids according to claim 17, wherein each ear canal end of the plurality of tubes comprises a cylindrical member with a plurality of annular ribs on the surface of the cylindrical member and each of the plurality of eartips comprises an interior socket with a plurality of internal circular grooves for accommodating the annular ribs of the ear canal end of one of the plurality of tubes.

32. (New) The hearing aid device according to Claim 21, wherein said eartip comprises an interior socket with a plurality of internal circular grooves and the second end of said tube comprises a cylindrical member with a plurality of annular ribs on the surface of the cylindrical member, the annular ribs being adapted to be accommodated to the plurality of internal circular grooves.